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## WORKS OF THE GREAT MASTERS.

## JAN STEEN.



Houbraken, who was for a short time the contemporary of Jan Steen, has represented this artist to us as a free drinker,



and relates of him such numerous excesses and ludicrous traits of character as to have given him in history the reputation of a confirmed drunkard and buffoon. All those who have spoken of Jan Steen, since Houbraken, have, in imitation of his biographer, repeated the jokes of the celebrated painter, so that they have become proverbial, especially in Holland. But, for want of having carefully studied his works, and in consequence of the practice, common to almost all book-makers, of copying one from the other, without making any sort of independent inquiry or research, the biographers have given us a false idea of the Dutch painter, in describing him as a man who was capable of nothing better than drinking and jesting. His private affairs, rather than his art, appear to have engaged their attention—they concerned themselves too much with what took place in his household, and did not rightly comprehend what passed in his mind.

It is, doubtless, quite true that Jan Steen lived at the ale-house, and ended by turning his own dwelling into a tavern. This view of his life should not, however, prevent us from describing his real merits, or from allowing, that though a free-liver, he was also a philosopher, a profound and acute observer, and able to raise himself without effort to the conception of beauty. Possessed of much comic power, he was skilful in portraying diversities of character, and in reproving the follies of mankind,—not with bitterness, but gaily, as it becomes a man who laughs both at the great and petty miseries of life.

Among the numerous biographical works of Arnold Houbraken—which are for the most part without interest, detail, or colour,—that of the life of Jan Steen is remarkable. One

feels that this writer, although younger than Jan Steen by twenty-four years, knew the man of whom he speaks, and derived the elements of his biography from a good source. He informs us that Jan Steen was born in 1636 at Leyden, in Holland, and that he was the contemporary and friend of Mieris. His master was Jan Van Goyen, under whose instruction he made great progress. Whilst he excited the admiration of this painter by the rapidity with which his talents developed themselves, he insinuated himself into his good graces, and eventually Van Goyen became so partial to him, that he granted him entire liberty in his house, and allowed him to live there on terms of the greatest intimacy. Van Goyen had a daughter, named Margaret, an indolent and simple, but very pretty girl, who, from being much amused by the continual jokes of Jan Steen, came at last to be far from indifferent to him. The affection of the youthful painter for the damsel being thus reciprocated, they agreed to marry, if the consent of their parents could be obtained. It naturally became the lover's task to communicate with the father of the young lady; and an opportunity was sought to accomplish this object. When he had finished his work in the *atelier*, he was accustomed to go in the evening to drink beer with Van Goyen. One day, finding the old man in a tolerably good humour, Jan Steen gently accosted him, although not without some hesitation. "I have," said he, "some news to tell you which will surprise you as much as if you were to hear the thunder rumble at Cologne. Your daughter and I, since it must be told, have an affection for each other; and, if you do not consider me unworthy, I shall be much honoured in becoming your son-in-law." Van Goyen, though rather surprised at this speech, for he had never thought of such a thing as his daughter's "falling in love," comprehended at once the force of Steen's argument, and that his resistance would only aggravate his pupil and his daughter. So, like a good father, he acceded with a good grace to the proposition of Jan Steen. But the latter did not find his own father, Havik Jan Steen, quite so easy to deal with. He was a brewer, established at Delft; a practical man, less sensible to the power of love than to the value of ready money. It was long before he would consent that his son should marry at an age when he was not in a condition to maintain a family by his labour. However, after much entreaty, he at last yielded to the pressing solicitations of Jan, and agreed that the nuptials should be celebrated. But, that his son might be in a fair pecuniary position, he built a brewery at Delft, where he established the newly-married couple, with a capital of 10,000 florins. Steen, finding himself in possession of ready money, and considering it but natural to spend it, thought only of leading a joyous life; and Margaret, on her part, constitutionally indolent, neither attended to her domestic duties nor to her counter.—

Je laisse à penser la vie  
Que firent nos deux amis.

It may easily be imagined that affairs managed by two persons of this temperament could not long continue in good condition. "Margaret," says Campo Weyerman, "kept no account-book; all the beer that was taken on credit from the house was set down in chalk upon a slate or a wooden board. Now it happened one day that, being accused of having defrauded the rights of the town-due, Jan Steen was summoned by the excise officer to show his books. The slate was produced, but no one could make any thing of it, not even Margaret Steen, who had left it all in confusion, and who was not in the habit of giving any thought to what she had written down. Nevertheless, a heavy fine was exacted, but, as the brewery was on the eve of its ruin, Jan Steen, laughing heartily, reminded the exciseman that, where there is nothing, the devil loses his right and the king too."

The artist-brewer was on the point of being forced to close his house when his father came to his assistance. But this only delayed the ruin of Jan Steen. Margaret confessed one morning to her jovial husband that there was absolutely nothing left in his cellar, neither beer nor casks, and that there

was scarcely corn enough to make a cake. It was all over Jan Steen saw the ruin of his brewery, for a second time, with an undisturbed mien, and was even the first to joke about his disaster. After all, said he to himself, here is a picture all ready; and, remembering that he was a painter, he set to work and depicted in a spirited composition the disorder of his house. This picture represents a room in which every thing is in confusion, the furniture is upset, the dog licks the saucepan, the cat runs off with the bacon, the children are sprawling on the floor, and the mother, seated in an arm-chair, calmly contemplates this delightful scene, whilst Jan Steen stands philosophically holding a glass in his hand.

This was our artist's first picture, and it is not astonishing that he, a painter of what are called conversation pieces, should have taken as his subject the scene which passed before his eyes. Those who have the genius to observe, look first at the objects which immediately surround them. But all biographers are much mistaken in saying that Jan Steen painted himself in all his works; and that almost all his compositions represent ale-house scenes, coarse farces or smoking-rooms, full of toppers. Nothing is further from the truth, as is proved by the works of this painter. Jan Steen has always allowed his sly humour to peep out of his pictures, but it is an exception when he has painted the customs of his life. When will the mania cease for copying from books without inquiring into the truth of their statements? Even in our days, that is to say, in a time in which the spirit of criticism is more than ever developed and exercised, we perceive this fault in some very valuable books, written by regular authors no less than by amateurs. For instance, in Smith's Catalogue, so exact and truthful in all that concerns the description of the pictures of each master, the author, repeating what the biographers have successively said, does not fail to observe that Jan Steen was the painter of his own manners and those of the society in which he lived. And this is even more surprising, because this preliminary notice is followed by a long catalogue of the known works of Jan Steen, and among more than 300 compositions, which are there described, only thirty have drunkenness for the subject, and the ale-house for the scene. This master takes the subjects of his pictures almost entirely from human life; we mean life considered from a comic point of view, from the side which amuses philosophers and good-tempered observers.

Another modern writer, M. Immerzeel,\* remarking, doubtless, that the works of Jan Steen had little relation to the circumstances of his life, as Houbraken and Campo Weyerman assert, has resolutely contested the assertions of the historians of his country, without giving any other reason than the startling contrast between the habits of a dissolute man and pictures so delicate, sometimes even so elegant, as those of Jan Steen. But how are we to deny facts which have been repeatedly affirmed and related in detail by a contemporary of Jan Steen, when such a denial is without proof, and really rests only upon a presumption, in itself very contestable? In short, is it inadmissible that a professed drinker may have refinement of mind, delicacy of feeling and the talent of observation? And even if genius were always incompatible with the sad propensity to drunkenness, what becomes of the observation of M. Immerzeel, opposed to the authority of a biographer, who, for more than a century, has not been contradicted, at least on this point?

Yes, Jan Steen was what the world calls a joyous toper, who went through life laughing—not with that coarse laugh which is only the gaiety of fools, but with that delicate, intelligent, and slightly sardonic smile which is the sportiveness of philosophers. He passed his life in observing men for his own amusement, and in painting for theirs. Nobody had a more communicative jovialty; and it is impossible to contemplate one of his pictures without feeling one's heart expand. He was the first to laugh at that bottle which he kept continually by his side, and which doubtless sustained

\* *De levens en werken der hollandsche en vlaamsche Kunst-schilders*. Amsterdam, 1842.

his Rabelaisian humour, although continually emptying and refilling it. And it is remarkable that, when he happened to represent drunken people, he never failed to ridicule their drunkenness; thus he seemed to preach temperance with the glass in his hand. Take, as an example of this curious fact, the celebrated picture, which was in the celebrated collection of Mr. Beckford; it is entitled, "The Effects of Intemperance." The artist has there painted himself, with his interesting and pretty wife, in the state of drowsiness which follows too frequent libations. She, dressed in a red jacket edged with ermine, over a silk petticoat, is seated in the middle of the room, as it becomes the mistress of the house. While the husband and wife sleep, others profit by their intoxication. The children are searching in their mother's pocket, and already a little boy has pulled forth a piece of money, which he holds aloft in his hand with a triumphant air; another holds a glass in his hand, which he appears about to dash to the ground and shiver in pieces. The servant of the house hastens to profit by so favourable a moment to declare his passion to a young girl, sliding into her hand some money, which no doubt he had also stolen. The dog seizes upon a pie; the cat breaks a china vase, in endeavouring to spring upon a cage containing a bird; the monkey amuses himself with some parchments and books; on the ground, scattered pell-mell, are silver dishes, broken glasses, a violin, a Bible, a china plate, and, as if the elements themselves must interfere, the fire is burning a goose which is on the spit.

Jan Steen has treated this subject several times, and a different version of it may be found among the valuable pictures in the collection formed by the late Duke of Wellington, at Apsley House. The monkey in this instance plays with the clock, as if, says Dr. Waagen, to show that the happy do not count the hours. But such a lesson given to drunkards has nothing pedantic, thanks to the good humour with which the painter has represented himself. Jan Steen, being a witty man, who wishes to continue amusing, bears on his own back the burden of human caprices and follies.

The picture called the "Young Gallant" (page 164) gives us the whole style and manner of Jan Steen in a single composition. It consists of six figures, sitting or standing round a table, on which are some eggs in a dish. A man in a chair at the left-front of the picture is talking to a dog, while on the opposite side a young fellow comes dancing in from the open doorway, holding a mackerel up by the tail, and carrying a few young onions in the other hand. The mistress of the house looks smilingly up from her seat, and another woman, standing at the table, desists from her household duties, and looks a smiling welcome to the young gallant. A man standing by the bedside prints to another going out at the door, probably the "good man" of the establishment. The entire composition—the candle-chandelier, decorated with flowers in token of the summer weather; the pipe stuck in the hat of the sitting figure, in the way our waggoners wear them even in this day; the heavy close-curtained bed, the bare room, the expectant dog looking up to the suspended fish, and the sunlight streaming in from window and garden doorway, bespeak a thoughtfulness for general effect and picturesque arrangement entirely Jan Steen's. This has been considered one of the best of his *genre* paintings.

In 1669, after his ill success as a brewer, he set up as a tavern-keeper. Old Havik Jan being just dead, Jan Steen came into possession of a house at Leyden. This induced him to leave the town of Delft, and to establish himself under the paternal roof; and there it was that he opened his tavern. He placed a sign-post before his door; and, as if he wished to effect a reconciliation with his creditors, he painted as the sign, a picture representing the figure of Peace, holding an olive-branch. Houbraken tells us he was his own best customer, and that he did not succeed better in this new occupation as brewer and tavern-keeper, though he possessed all the gaiety, all the animation, which attracts customers to an ale-house. He was, probably, better able to induce them to drink than to pay. Most of those who frequented his house were painters as poor as himself. Franz Mieris, Ary de Vos,

Quiering, Brackelenkamp, and Jan Lievens were among those who resorted there, day and night; for Jan Steen never shut his door, that he might show his friends that he was not afraid, and because, having little to lose, he could laugh in the face of thieves. His cellar being soon emptied, he was obliged to take down his sign. In this extremity the painter came to the help of the tavern-keeper. The wine-merchant not being willing to give him credit any longer, Steen presented him with a little picture—in Holland every one likes painting—and the merchant sent a puncheon of wine in exchange. The sign re-appeared—Steen's friends re-assembled to listen to his facetious stories, and the band of painters, who had turned out, hastened back, resolved not to leave the place while a drop of liquor remained in Master Jan's taps. But the cask did not last long, and this time it was necessary to close the tavern entirely.

Campo Weyerman, a facetious writer, who has sought out sarcastic expressions, some of which are marked by the grossest triviality, has enlarged upon the life of Jan Steen, and related numerous anecdotes, interspersed with coarse jokes, in which the piquancy especially consists in the unpolished language. After having exhausted his facetiousness, he accuses his predecessor Houbraken of borrowing his anecdotes of Jan Steen from the Almanack of Liège, and of retailing a little story, *as dry as sea biscuit at the line, and as probable as the travels of Pinto*, about some incredible supply of bread made to the family of the painter. These censures have not prevented Campo Weyerman from relating many anecdotes himself; "A little story," says he, "will show that the kitchen and cellar of Jan Steen were not so abundantly supplied as the hotels on the quay of Y, or the *Lion d'or* at the Hague. Once, towards midnight, the famous Jan Lievens (pupil and friend of Rembrandt) knocked at Jan Steen's residence, and the door being only latched, according to custom, he entered without ceremony. 'Who's there?' demanded Jan, waking up with a start. 'It is I, dear brother,' said Lievens, 'I am come to bring you a couple of chickens, as fat as strong Brunswick beer, as white as the white of an egg, and as tender as the leg of a pheasant.' 'Are they roasted?' asked Steen. 'No, king of the universe,' replied Lievens, 'they are raw; but I have resided in several courts, and there I learned to cook; I pray you, then, get up, and I will serve you up a dish in my own way.' Jan got up, lighted his lamp, and calling Corneille, his eldest son, who was his waiter, ordered him to prepare every thing for the repast. But some of the ingredients in the worldly pleasures of our two painters, who especially regretted the absence of wine and tobacco, were wanting. In spite of the reluctance of Corneille to ask for credit, Steen sent him to the wine merchant, Gorkens, to beg him, for the last time, to advance some wine, for which he should be paid in paintings. 'That done,' added the father, 'you will go to Gerard Vander Laan, and ask him for a pennyworth of leaf-tobacco, with a couple of little pipes, and you will swear in my name that my gratitude will be eternal.' Whilst Corneille ran through the town to awaken the tradesmen and to execute his commissions, Jan Lievens set to work, without losing a moment, plucked his fowls and placed them on a broken gridiron, which was buried in the peat dust to preserve it from rust; and Jan Steen, on his part, prepared a highly-flavoured sauce with pepper, mustard, vinegar, and butter. When the fowls were scarcely cooked through, the two companions began to devour them with such an appetite, that poor Corneille, returning quite out of breath, with his supply of wine and tobacco, only found, upon the earthenware dish, a head and a-half and three black feet. The wine and the packet of tobacco, which had just arrived, were now all that remained to be consumed, and this did not occupy long. After Steen and Lievens had thus satisfied their appetites, they went to take an airing outside the *Porte-aux-Vaches*, and walked along talking morality like true disciples of Pythagoras. But Jan Steen paid dearly for the carelessness with which, relying always on Providence, he ventured from home, leaving the door on the latch, as is the custom in the little towns of Westphalia. Whilst he slept, all his clothes, as well

as those of his children, were carried off; and, to put the finishing stroke to his misfortunes, the canvas and panels, on which he was employed in painting pictures for his creditors, were also taken. The tavern-keeper, who was accustomed to be awakened by the noise of the children, remained in bed; but finding that the house was silent longer than usual, 'Holloa, you rogues,' cried he, 'get up at last and light the fire.' The children replied by the denial of Adam, complaining that they were naked and could not find their clothes. Steen stretched forth his hand to reach his garments, but,

a pirate, and he, being as poor as a church mouse, was the man to rob a painter without much scruple, when occasion prompted. 'The suspicions of Jan Steen' were aroused against the chemist, and when he came expressly to condole with him on the loss of his clothes and his pictures, Steen, no doubt incensed by so much hypocrisy, received Esculapius, knife in hand.—'Race of thieves!' cried he, 'pirate! buccaneer! thou shalt see if thou canst carry off the shell after having taken the yoke of the egg!' At this exclamation, the alarmed doctor immediately took flight, and although he was innocent,



THE YOUNG GALLANT.

finding that his whole wardrobe had vanished, he was obliged to send one of the little Adamites to the cook, Gommert Bans, who lent him some clothes till he could tell his misfortune to his nephew Rynsberg, who took the plundered Jan and his featherless chickens to a woollen draper's, where the father and his progeny issued like so many of those birds of the sun, baptized by Pliny by the name of *Phœnix*. The most ludicrous part of the story is what happened to a doctor, who frequented Jan Steen's alehouse, and sometimes served him as a model. The brother of this doctor had the reputation of being

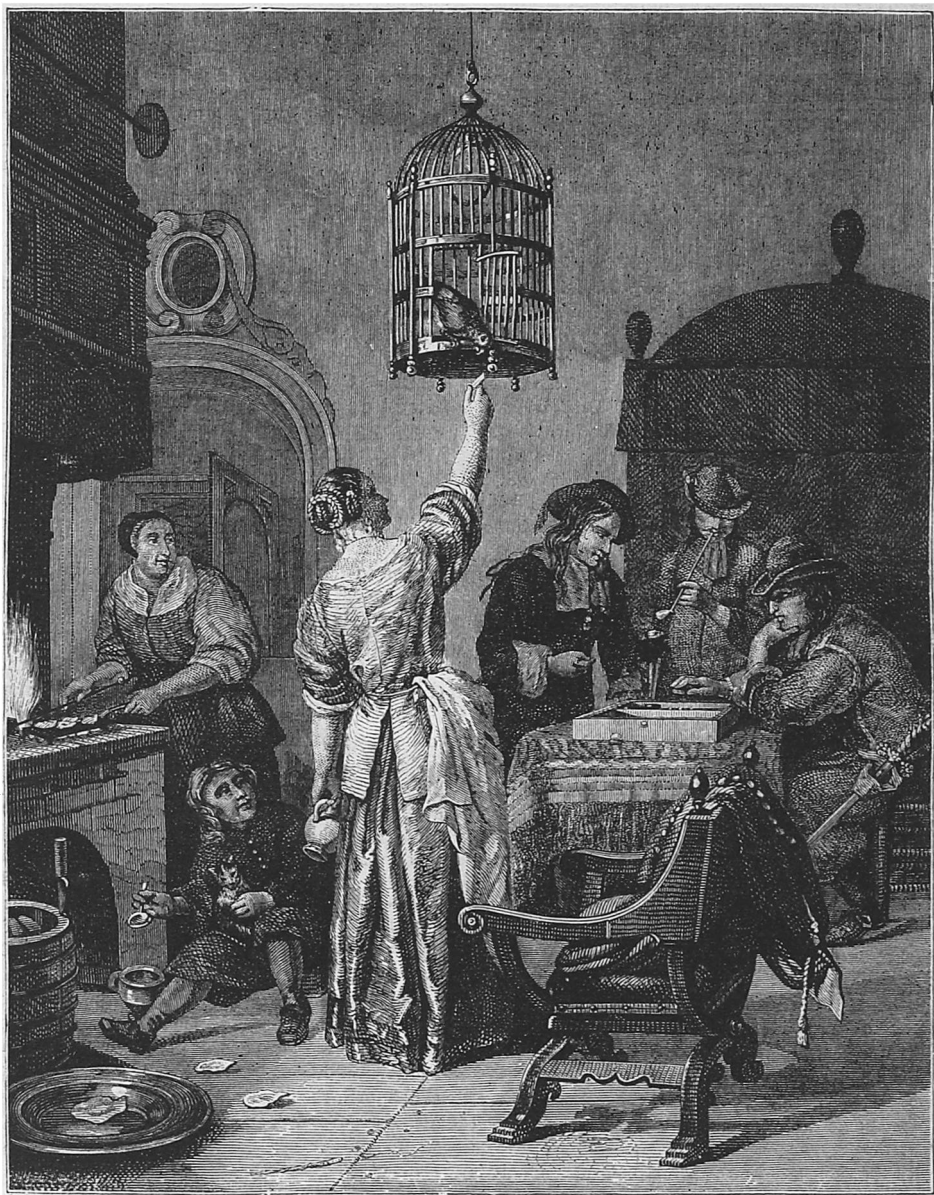
he left Jan Steen persuaded that the robbery had been committed by the very man who had just expressed so much regret that it had taken place."

Among Jan Steen's companions, and, like him, a determined drinker, was the celebrated painter, Franz Mieris. Judging from his carefully-finished little pictures, and the elegance of his compositions, one would never have suspected that Mieris passed his life in drinking, and in listening to the humorous speeches of Jan Steen, who, by means of his superior intelligence, and the amusing sallies of his inexhaustible wit, exer-



cised an irresistible influence over him. This painter of rich interiors and silk dresses yielded in spite of himself to the ascendancy of Jan Steen, even following him into the midst of taverns, and there passing whole nights in a state of oblivion. Nevertheless, completely as he was ruled by his friend, Mieris had, in his turn, and perhaps without being conscious of it, a decisive influence over the manners of Steen; by this, however, we do not mean his manner of thinking, but his manner of painting. This influence is often perceptible in the larger works of the tavern philosopher. One often meets with a

bronze; a guitar hangs from one of the panels; and a beautiful landscape is enclosed in an ebony frame. The repast is composed of delicious fruits, and some ready-opened oysters which glisten temptingly, the sight of which "makes one's mouth water." There are ripe grapes, fine peaches, whose downy skins rival the blush upon a maiden's cheek, and lemons, part of whose golden peel lies beside them. Such was the reciprocal influence which Mieris and Jan Steen possessed over each other; and, in connexion with this subject, we remember, that whilst standing before the pretty



THE PARROT.

"Dutch Repast," a "Game at Backgammon," in which the careful execution and soft, tender touch remind one of Mieris; and the elaborate style is then in harmony with the importance of the subject, and the distinguished appearance of all the personages in the picture. There is no coarse drinking, as in the taverns of Adrian Brauwer. Each one plays his part naturally, and sometimes even gracefully; not one ignoble accessory obtrudes upon the order of the house, and the details of the furniture are all in accordance with the refinement of the guests. For instance, on the mantel-shelf is seen a Cupid in

picture, which is called "The Parrot" in the Amsterdam Gallery, an amateur came up who, at first sight, took this Jan Steen for a Mieris. In this picture the figures are elegantly dressed and very good-looking. Three gentlemen, their swords at their sides and their short mantles thrown over the back of the arm-chair, are playing at backgammon; a charming woman, negligently dressed in a silk petticoat, is feeding the parrot. Her arms are raised for this purpose, and, her back being turned towards the spectators, her face is only seen in profile; while the parrot, whose cage, in the shape of

a lantern, is hung from the ceiling, is putting out his claw for the tender morsel. A child is feeding a cat, and a matron engaged in cooking some veal on a gridiron, for the gentlemen to eat between the games, completes the charming picture.

"The Aged Invalid" (p. 172) is another of Steen's *genre* compositions. It is conceived in his happiest spirit, and represents an incident common enough in high life in all countries. A rich hypochondriac is servilely tended by various friends and nurses, who, while they feign great affection and care for his person, are every one of them intent upon making a purse for themselves by favouring his whims and fancies. Here, as in many others of Steen's paintings, the physician and family friends are introduced. The nurse-maid is warming the bed, while on the floor are scattered various tokens of sickness—bottles, caudle-pans, cooking utensils, and a chamber candlestick, with which a cat is playing. All is real and life-like, and every figure and object seems to have its place and purpose; and the whole picture is carefully drawn. The colours in the original, which were once bright and transparent, have, however, yielded, says Kùgler, to the finger of Time.

But Jan Steen, when he abandons himself to his own fancy, may be easily recognised by the sprightly mirth of his composition. It is almost impossible to find a picture of his in which there is not a sly meaning. He translates popular proverbs with sufficient spirit to relieve their triteness; and, by the appearance of the figures, the appropriateness of their gestures, and the part that each one plays in the comedy of life, according to the character suited to his age, trade, or condition, he gives these proverbs piquancy. Doctors have often called forth the caustic wit of Jan Steen; besides, it was the custom with all the artists of the seventeenth century to turn them to ridicule. Whilst Molière paraded them on the French stage, Jan Steen delighted in painting them, in all the quackery of their gravity, in all the severity of their costume, studied for effect.

The "Dancing Dog," which we give at page 168, may be considered a gem—a complete triumph of artistic arrangement and varied colour. It consists of ten figures, with the dancing dog in the front centre. Jan Steen's whole family are portrayed in this composition. There is the painter himself with his invariably good-natured smile and his violin in his hand—for he was a tolerable musician as well as a good artist—sitting between his wife and mother. The latter offers him a glass of wine,—an offer he was seldom known to refuse,—and the former looks lovingly into his eyes, while she allows his friend to seize her by the hand and invite her to join in the dance. One of his sons plays the flute to the dog, another is dipping water from the vine-decorated water-tub, and a third, a fine plump little fellow, with a whistle in his hand, stands behind in calm contemplation of the joyous scene. Just behind the jovial old lady stands a figure, whom we may suppose to be Franz Mieris, holding a tankard; and in the back centre are a couple of figures with smiling faces, whom the painter probably introduced to fill up the unseemly gap which the disposition of his other figures would have left in the picture. The owl on the wall looks wisely down, as becomes a bird of his staid and solemn nature, while the parrot, released from his cage, seems to listen to the music with quite a critical ear. Trees hang over the garden wall in the extreme distance, and a rich piece of drapery disposed in graceful folds, contrasts admirably with the sameness of the walls before which it is suspended, and gives an air of finish and luxurious refinement to the whole. The accessories are few and simple, and consist—as in most pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools—of the utensils of the table, and the means of enjoyment—drinking cups, dishes, pipes, and so on. This picture is at the Hague, where it is highly esteemed as a good exemplification of the artist's peculiar humour. The painter's family, grouped in various ways, has often formed the subject of his pictures.

Quite different in style and moral feeling is the elegant little picture called "Le Benedicite" (page 169). Here the sentiment is pure and holy; but even here the painter's comic vein

peeps out,—for the dog licks the empty soup-pot, and the toyship and child's ball are made accessory to the action of the picture. Peasant life in Holland is nowhere so fully shown as in the compositions of Jan Steen. While in the pictures of Terburg we have the ease and tranquillity of well-bred society, the noise and riot, the humour and jovialty—the high spirits and special license of middle and low life in Holland, is discovered in the paintings of Jan Steen. There is never any difficulty in reading the story which he tells with his eloquent pencil. In the "Dancing Dog," no less than in the "Grace before Meat," we have a simple incident simply expressed. In the one case all is life, fun, and frolic; in the other, an air of tranquil satisfaction and calm prayerful sincerity sits upon all faces; in each the expression is suited to the subject, and a perfect harmony pervades the picture. The whole economy of a Dutch family—their pleasures and their duties, may be discovered in these two pictures.

It is asserted that Jan Steen was related to Metzu, who was, like him, originally from the town of Leyden. It is certain that the style of Gabriel Metzu may be recognised in some pictures of his compatriot; for example, in the "Nativity of St. John," which was in the Braamcamp collection, in 1771, and was sold for 1,210 florins. It is equally certain that Steen painted the portrait of Metzu, and that of his wife: these two portraits appeared in a sale which took place at Paris, in 1774. But that there was the same kind of intimacy between Steen and Metzu, as existed between Steen and Mieris, is not likely, on account of the character and quiet habits of Gabriel Metzu. Houbraken does not mention their friendship; nevertheless, it is probable that this biographer was personally acquainted with the amusing brewer, whose jests he relates, and from whom he bought more than one picture. However, without drawing the elegant and sedate painter from the rich Dutch boudoir to the tavern, Jan Steen could charm him by his conversation; for no one spoke better of his art than he; and, without having learnt its rules, he seemed to have guessed them by the inspiration of genius. We may confidently assert that the great principles, which he has so well observed in his small pictures, could not have been derived either from the instruction of Kimper—who was, it is said, his first master—or from his good father-in-law Van Goyen, who was, nevertheless, a very clever man.

How many intellectual harmonies, which have been overlooked by most of the Dutch painters, has Jan Steen perfectly understood! With him every one plays his part and retains his character throughout. Costume, bearing, physiognomy, gesture—each heightens the force of expression, and contributes something to the unity of the figure. The doctor preserves his professional importance; he is clothed in black from head to foot, and is grave from foot to head. The tooth-drawer adds a cock's feather to the peaked hat of the doctor, and gives a little more depth to the wrinkles of his forehead. The jolly peasant is distinguished from the lively citizen. The attitude of the betrothed is not exactly that of the young lover. The action of the notary is in character with his function and his habits; and, as to the drunkard, he betrays himself in the smallest details of his dress, and in the slightest leanings of his body. In short, Jan Steen could not have called forth the apostrophe of Garrick, the celebrated comedian, who, seeing an actor play the part of a drunken man with much truth, by the indecision of his look, the disfigurement of his features, and the embarrassment of his broken talk, while the action of the rest of his body did not correspond to these expressions, said to him: "My friend, thy head is truly drunk, but thy feet and legs are full of sense."

In a fit of ill-humour against the masters of the Dutch school, M. Paillot de Montabert exclaims, "This good man in black, what does he want here? What is he going to do? This is what one asks one's self in the presence of a Dutch picture; but before those of Jan Steen we do not feel the same uncertainty. The figures are characteristic, he has carried to a very high degree of perfection the delicacy, life, and precision of the character. However, but how many Jan Steens are there in this school?" With all the good qualities

indicated in the above criticism, Jan Steen did not make his fortune; indeed, he scarcely succeeded better in his career as a painter, than as a brewer or tavern-keeper. His pictures, so much prized now, were very poorly paid for during his lifetime. They were only to be found then, says Descamps, at wine merchants' houses. He, however, did not trouble himself much about the prices of his pictures, and had neither the talent to value them nor the inclination to take the trouble of doing so. On all occasions he showed a marked contempt for money. It happened one day, that he received some gold as the price of a picture. Immediately, without listening to his wife, who was unwilling to leave any large sum in his hands, he went to the tavern, spent part of the money in drink, and lost the rest in gaming. His wife, seeing him return happy, and in good humour, asked him what he had done with his money? "I have it no longer," said Steen, laughing, "and the best of the joke is, that the companions who have taken it from me think they have duped me, whilst they are dupes themselves. Of all the gold coins which you saw me with to-day, there is not one that is not light. Now, I leave you to imagine how they will look to-morrow, when they discover it!" Light! this word, so amusing in this particular instance, Jan Steen might apply to life—to his own at least. In fact, nothing weighed him down in an existence, passed in observing men, in laughing at their caprices, and depicting their carousals.

Were we to judge from his pictures, we might suppose that not a cloud of sadness had ever come to trouble the serenity of his mind. It was not that he did not see the discouraging side of things, but he did not give himself up to discouragement; and, inaccessible himself to melancholy, it did not throw its shade upon his compositions. There exists a celebrated picture of his, which is the exact representation of human life. It is in the gallery of the Hague, and we should not be able to abstain from giving a description of it here, had we not found one, simple, striking, and brief, in the catalogue *raisonné* of this valuable gallery, arranged by M. Van Steengracht Van Costkapelle. "The subject," says this connoisseur, "seems to point out the different periods of existence. In the foreground some children are playing with a cat; beyond, a woman is courted by a young man; near the hearth an old man is seated, holding a child on his knee; the old man and the child are amusing themselves with a parrot. A servant is cooking some oysters; in the background several persons drink, smoke, and play. A picture, hung upon the wall behind, represents a gibbet, as if to point out the end reserved for those who give themselves up to excess in drinking and gambling. An opening made into the granary beyond, discovers a young man carelessly reclining and blowing soap-bubbles, with a death's head at his side; an impressive allusion to the vanity and emptiness of life. A thick curtain at the top of the picture is suspended above these various personages, and seems to threaten, by its fall, to end this whole scene of human action. There is nothing in painting more ingenious or more striking than the simple idea of this vast curtain, which immediately gives one to understand, that the scene represented is the "Comedy of Life."

Jan Steen had six children by Margaret Van Goyen, who died before him; but, as if not contented with these, he took it into his head to contract a second marriage with a widow named Mariette Herkulens, who had two children of her own. This large family constantly furnished models to the painter; he delighted to represent them with disordered hair and dress, in all the sprightliness of their frolics, observing the variations of age, from the extreme simplicity of the little girl who plays with a rattle or teases the cat, to the comical gaiety of the lad of fourteen, who already assumes the manners of a man. His old parents also figured in his pictures whenever he wished to represent old age, so that, like a true philosopher, Jan Steen observed the whole human family without leaving his own; and there was nothing, even to his spotted dog, which he did not admit to the honours of painting, and consider worthy to represent his whole race. The Dutch have a proverb, which, when translated, runs thus:—"As the old sing, the young

whistle." Wishing to illustrate this saying, and to characterise the pleasures of each age, Jan Steen painted the portraits of all his family, in a picture which may be seen in the Museum of the Hague, and which is rendered still more valuable by the artist's having represented himself, between his two wives, Margaret Van Goyen and Mariette Herkulens. These persons were both good-looking, the first especially, if we may rely upon the brush of their husband, who, however, was not a man likely to flatter either them or himself. Mariette Herkulens sold ready-cooked calves' and sheep's heads and feet in the market. Steen's union with her was not exactly a prudent marriage, and the poor painter saw his increased family sink into the deepest misery; but for this he appears to have shown little concern.

The day of St. Nicholas is in Holland the children's fête, and it is known that on that day fathers and mothers are accustomed to fill the shoes of their little ones with all sorts of playthings and sweetmeats, making them believe that St. Nicholas came during the night to throw these *bombons* down the chimney for them. Jan Steen has treated this subject in several of his works, and it is evident that, like a good father, he often celebrated the fête of St. Nicholas. With the exception, perhaps, of Hogarth and Wilkie, among the modern artists, no painter—certainly no painter of the Dutch school—has carried the expression of human sentiments, as they are discovered in private and familiar life, to so high a degree of perfection as Jan Steen. What variety of physiognomy; how much truth of character! Whilst from a window in the background the grandmother, playing the part of the saint, throws dainties into the fire-place, the children rush to pick up the presents which the good saint sends them. They hurry forward, push against each other, upset the chairs, and tumble on the ground. A little girl holds out her apron, her eye expressive of hope and faith, and a boy, cap in hand, goes a begging among his more fortunate rivals. A baby, with outstretched arms, seems to claim his share; and the servant, animating the competitors with voice and gesture, seems to say, "You see what it is to be good!" We may repeat what M. Burtin has justly said of Jan Steen, that not only can we perceive the thoughts of each person in this picture; but we seem to hear what he says.\* The most amusing and comical figure in this composition is that of a boy of nine or ten years of age, who, carelessly leaning against the chimney-piece, smiles, with an intelligent and superior air, at the innocence of his little brothers, and seems quite proud of knowing that St. Nicholas has nothing to do with the matter. Play of feature could scarcely be rendered with greater truth than in the works of Jan Steen, and, except perhaps Chardin, we should scarcely find his equal, in this respect, among the masters of the French school. The Dutchman has thus secured for himself a lasting celebrity. "So long as there is expression in your pictures," wrote Pope Ganganelli (Clement XIV.) to an artist friend of his, "you may congratulate yourself upon your works. That constitutes the essence, and renders many faults excusable, which one would not pardon in an ordinary artist."

Houbraken relates, that he long possessed and preserved in his house one of Steen's pictures, which was afterwards sold to the Duke of Wolfenbuttel. The subject of this picture was the signing of a marriage contract. The attitudes and gestures of all the figures are so natural and so expressive, that the spectator imagines himself to be present at the ceremony, and even to take part in it. The two fathers-in-law, completely bent upon asserting their respective claims, are explaining them with much earnestness to the notary, who, pen in hand, listens with a grave and attentive air. The bridegroom, transported with anger, throws his hat upon the ground, together with the wedding presents. He shrugs his shoulders, raises his hands, and looks at his affianced bride, as if to give her to understand that he takes no part in such vulgar calcu-

\* *Traité théorique et pratique des Connaissances qui sont nécessaires à tout amateur de tableaux*, par François Xavier de Burtin, Brussels, 1808. M. de Burtin describes this "Fête de St. Nicholas" as having formed part of his own collection.



lations. She appears moved, and as a return of tenderness, casts her eyes, full of gratitude and love upon her future husband. "It must be confessed," says Houbraken, "that this picture is admirable for expression.

Amongst the friends of Jan Steen was the Chevalier Karel de Moor, the celebrated painter of Leyden. In one of the frequent visits which he paid to his countryman, hearing that Mariette Steen had long teased her husband to paint her portrait, and that Steen continually promised, but never kept

husband, could not help laughing at this joke, and her portrait, thus completed, appeared to her more charming than ever.

Happy the painters who have excelled in expression, in character! They are certain of renown during their lives, and of fame afterwards. If the number of amateurs who appreciate the properties of touch, delicate *impasto*, purity and felicity of tone—in short, all that constitutes the technical in art, is limited; on the other hand, almost every body of any



THE DANCING DOG.

his word, Karel de Moor offered to pay her the compliment of executing the long-desired picture. She joyfully accepted his offer, and dressed herself in her smartest clothes for the occasion. The picture finished, Mariette immediately carried it to Jan Steen, who highly approved of it. "There is but one thing wanting," said he, "which I will add." Then, taking his palette and brushes, he painted, in a few strokes, a large basket hanging on her arm, filled with sheep's heads and feet. "You understand," said Steen, "that without this basket you would not be known." The wife, as philosophical as her

enlightenment is able to understand the thoughts which an artist has translated by his brush, and is solicitous at least to appear interested in them. We do not mean to say that ingenious turn of thought can compensate, in painting, for feebleness of execution; but, when the execution is sufficiently vigorous to please the eye, it is a great advantage to the popularity of the artist to awaken in us sentiments and ideas, the effectiveness of which is independent of the prejudices of schools and of national and local customs. By working upon the human mind, which has always points of resem-

blance, one may suit the taste of the most opposite people. Such has been the fortune of Jan Steen, one of the masters of the Dutch school, whose works command the highest prices even in our day. Holland and England, especially, contend for his pictures, which, however, do not always need the indulgence that the comic humour of the painter might fairly claim for them. In fact, if there is a want of uniformity in his painting, if it is sometimes poor, inconsistent, and blame-

tures—as, for instance, in the “Sick Young Woman;” but he certainly had two manners. Sometimes his composition is hurried, careless, too uniformly brown in tone, and his colouring seems harsh and inharmonious; sometimes he painted with a clear and exquisite colouring, in the elaborate style of Mieris, but with more liveliness than that master. This latter style is especially marked in Jan Steen’s “Country Wedding,” in the museum of Amsterdam. It is a little *chef-d’œuvre*, in



GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

able, on account of the carelessness of execution; on the other hand, his pictures are often carefully finished and executed with firmness, in the style of Gabriel Metz. They are rendered piquant by a touch of humour, and their tints are charmingly fresh and clear. We do not know whether it is true that all the drunken and disorderly habits, to which Jan Steen abandoned himself, were the cause of the extreme negligence which is observable in certain portions of his pic-

tures, which the light is as well managed, and the execution as rich, as in a Van Ostade. Jan Steen has occasionally the vigour and depth of Peter Van Hooghe, and his painting proves that execution is subordinate to intellect, and that the mind guides the brush at least as much as the hand.

The interiors of Jan Steen, like those of Ostade, are taken from a raised point of view, so that the figures which are in the further part of the room are not hidden by those in

the foreground. A second window is generally introduced in his backgrounds, to throw light on the distant figures and objects. Then the number of utensils is less than with the other Dutch painters: Jan Steen had too much sense to multiply them uselessly and without measure. No superfluity is found in his pictures, and if the painter introduce some kettles, a frying-pan, a pestle, or other utensils, it is only to recal the familiarities of domestic life. Like Metzu, Steen liked to paint framed pictures to adorn the walls of his "Repasts," his "Joyous Meetings;" and it is remarkable that these frames are always filled with noble subjects—engagements of the cavalry, heroic landscapes, and fabulous scenes, as, for instance, the conflict between the Centaurs and the Lapithæ.

Jan Steen died, in 1689, at the age of fifty-three. He left nine children, concerning whose future he never troubled himself. The son he had by his second wife was named Thierry, and practised sculpture at the court of a German prince. Of the other children nothing is known.

Dr. Franz Kugler, a most friendly and judicious critic, thus speaks of the character of Jan Steen as an artist:—"His works imply a free and cheerful view of common life, and he treats it with a careless humour, such as seems to deal with all its daily occurrences, high and low, as a laughable masquerade, and a mere scene of perverse absurdity. His treatment of subjects differed essentially from that adopted by other artists. Frequently, indeed, they are the same jolly drinking parties, or the meetings of boors; but in other masters the object is, for the most part, to depict a certain situation, either quiet or animated, whilst in Jan Steen is generally to be found action, more or less developed, together with all the reciprocal relations and interests between the characters which spring from it. This is accompanied by great force and variety of individual expression, such as evinces the sharpest observation. He is almost the only artist of the Netherlands who has thus, with true genius, brought into full play all these elements of comedy. His technical execution suits his design; it is carefully finished, and notwithstanding the closest attention to minute details, is as firm and correct as it is free and light."

This artist, who never painted for the mere pleasure of painting, has had the honour of being cited by Sir Joshua Reynolds as one of the most eminent masters. He says of him, that if with his genius he had had better models, in point of taste, he might have ranged with the greatest pillars of art. His lasting renown is not to be accounted for by the numerous anecdotes which the Dutch historians have related of his life, and which are all more or less ridiculous, but arises from the fact that his pictures, being full of sense and sly humour, remarkable for expression, and amusing from their comic meaning, delight all those who, not wishing to have their minds uninterested in the admiration of works of art, look for something else in painting than the representation of a carpet, the execution of a silk dress, or the delicacy of a tone.

Jan Steen, perhaps the most jovial and lively of Dutch masters, has treated every kind of subject, domestic, grotesque, and bacchanalian scenes, conversation pieces, landscapes, history, and religion. By his hand are "The Continence of Scipio;" "Jesus Preaching in the Wilderness;" "The Marriage of Cana," &c. &c.; but let us observe that the comic sentiment of the artist penetrates even these compositions.

At any rate, the superintendents of public museums, as well as amateurs, endeavour, with a very justifiable earnestness, to obtain the works of the celebrated Dutchman.

In the royal collection of Windsor Castle there is a fine specimen of Jan Steen's best period. It is the interior of a Dutch cottage, with the inmates preparing for a meal. Although a small picture, being only fifteen inches in height and twelve in breadth, it is full of evidences of Steen's peculiar method of treatment, and homely, though forcible style. It consists of eight figures in all: in the front is a man with a pipe, playing with three children, while a woman is laying a

cloth on a table behind, and others are engaged in the processes of cooking at the fire. It is hung in the apartment called the King's closet, between a picture attributed to Andrea del Sarto and a Holy Family of Teniers.

Neither at the English National Gallery, nor at Dulwich, which is rather famous for Dutch and Flemish pictures, is there a single specimen from our painter's easel.

In the private galleries of English noblemen and gentlemen, however, there are many pictures illustrative of what may be called low life in the Netherlands. Thus, besides the seven pictures of Jan Steen's in Queen Victoria's private collection, there are several examples of our master's best manner in the possession of Sir Robert Peel, Lord Francis Egerton, Lord Ashburton, the Duke of Wellington, the Earl of Shrewsbury, Mr. Hope, Mr. Munro, the late Mr. Beckford, the Earl of Scarsdale, and the Marquis of Bute, besides numerous genuine Steens in the houses of amateurs of art.

Her Britannic Majesty's private collection at Buckingham Palace contains by far the most rare examples of the Dutch masters in England. This collection was originally formed by George the Fourth, whose predilection for Flemish and Dutch pictures is well known. Through the agency of Lord Farnborough, many of the most precious specimens of Jan Steen's pencil were secured to this country. Of the seven pictures by this master, the most celebrated in this collection is "A Family Party," in which the painter has introduced himself playing on the violin. The group consists of eleven persons, all of whom are amusing themselves in various ways—card-playing, singing, and laughing. There is a vast deal of humour in this composition, and the treatment is more than commonly careful; but the tone of the colour is considered by artists rather too dark in some parts—an accident which may possibly be the work of time; and the picture cleaner. "Twelfth Night," a group of twelve persons, with the king of the revels in the centre. "A Company of Country People indulging in riotous mirth before the door of a Public-house;" "The Card Party," a small composition, consisting of four figures; "The Village Feast," which represents the interior of a tavern, with a number of country people eating, drinking, and dancing; a nameless picture, having for its subject a young lady at the toilet; and one other completes the list. Of the last in our list, Dr. Waagen\* does not presume to offer an opinion, though of the "Village Feast," and the "Maiden's Toilet," he speaks in high terms. The one he pronounces to be "full of the happiest and merriest thoughts, but at the same time delicately finished;" and of the other, he says, "that in admirable *impasto* and spirited execution it rivals the finest Metzu;" and that the "bright masterly graduated light and the cool harmony of the colours, in which blue and purple prevail, make this one of the choicest pictures of the master."

Lord Francis Egerton's collection of paintings—known as the Bridgewater Gallery, from its founder, the duke—is famous also for its examples of the Dutch and Flemish masters. The Village School of Jan Steen, a picture which cost its owner no less a sum than £1,500, and one or two smaller specimens of the same master are deservedly esteemed.

Lord Ashburton's collection of paintings at his house in Piccadilly—permission to view being easily obtainable—is one of the lions of the metropolis. The two specimens of Jan Steen—which hang beside other worthy examples of art from the Netherlands—are especially commendable for "the care and delicacy of their finish, the humour of their incidents, and the warmth of their tones." These quoted words are those of a most learned art-critic; but as one of the finest of these paintings has been selected by our artist for illustration, we may be excused if we dwell a little longer upon its peculiarities. *THE GAME OF SKITTLES* (p. 173), is one of Jan Steen's most successful pictures; and not its least merit is its entire originality and genuineness—its history, from the celebrated Poulain collection to that of Prince Talleyrand—through seven cabinets, in fact,—having been clearly traced. It is a composi-

\* Works of Art and Artists in England. By Dr. Waagen.

tion of nine figures, and is painted on panel, 13½ inches in height, and 10½ inches in width—a size not uncommon with the best of the Dutch masters. Two men are playing at skittles in the foreground, with a couple of boys watching the game; while, on the grass to the left, are seated a young man and woman, the latter drinking from a long Flemish glass, and a man smoking a pipe with a pitcher of liquor before him. A horse belonging to one of the company stands patiently by the fence, an old fellow appears in the field beyond, and looks longingly over at the group upon the grass, and a woman is seen in the background, as if trudging homewards. This picture has been pronounced a "model of picturesque arrangement;" but we may go farther than that, and say, that for careful finish, delicacy of tone, cheerful humour, and freedom from coarseness and vulgarity, this picture of Jan Steen's is superior to many attributed to him. Indeed, the spirited execution of the landscape, in which the effect of a bright evening sunlight is well and feelingly represented, and the minute touches of nature everywhere observable, stamp this as one of the most successful of the Dutchman's pictorial efforts. "Worthy of Cuyt," was the late Mr. Turner's exclamation on looking at this picture when it was first placed in its present position; and worthy indeed it is of all praise, as an incomparable specimen of careful finish and brilliant execution. How different are the manner and moral of the little engraving under the portrait—a reduced copy of a large engraving in the Munich gallery.

In the Duke of Wellington's collection, at Apsley House, are several fine examples of Jan Steen. One of the most striking is that to which we have already referred—"The Tipsy Mother." This is really quite a moral lesson. The mother, sleeping off the fumes of the liquor, sits stupidly in the centre of the room, while one of her sons empties her pockets, and two others assist in conveying away the purloined property. The eldest daughter is engaged in an evidently interesting conversation with her lover, while a fiddler romps with the servant-girl. Confusion and riot reign supreme; but with all this, and over and above the humour and truth of the delineation, "this picture has the merit of careful execution and clear colouring."

Mr. Hope's gallery contains three good pictures—"The Glutton," and its companion, "The Christening;" and another of a large company singing and dancing before an ale-house. Of the first, Dr. Waagen says:—"The expression of boundless thoughtlessness and total absorption in transitory sensual pleasure was perhaps never represented in such a masterly manner as in this jolly fellow, who, with his whole face laughing, looks with the most wanton complacency at a pretty girl, who presents a glass of wine to him, while an old woman is opening oysters for him. In the foreground is a dog, and in a back room two gentlemen playing backgammon. The picture of Fortune over the mantel-piece, with the inscription, 'Lightly come, lightly go,' is like similar allusions in Hogarth's pictures. Marked with the artist's name and 1661. The careful execution is at the same time as spirited and free as the conception, the colouring glowing and powerful, the light and shade equal in clearness and depth to De Hooge."

In the collection, formed by the late Mr. Beckford, the author of "Vathek," at Fonthill Abbey, near Bath, was a famous picture, called the "Progress of Intemperance," of which we have already spoken, in page 3. This picture—which is two feet nine inches in height by three feet in width—may be traced through the well-known collections of Danser, Hyman, Smeth, Van Alpen, Sereville, and Dalberg. The sum of 220 guineas, for which it was sold at the dispersion of Mr. Watson Taylor's collection, proves that, even in England, the best pictures are sometimes sold at prices which, compared to those obtained on the continent occasionally, are not considered very high.

Lord Northwick's collection contains the "Marriage of Cana," not a very successful painting; and in the Marquis of Bute's gallery, at Luton, are three pictures by Jan Steen, which are thus described by Dr. Waagen:—"1. A Cock-

fight. A composition of twelve figures, full of happy thoughts. An old Man holds out his hand to a young Man, to receive payment of a bet, at which another laughs. In clearness of colouring too, in spirited, and, at the same time, careful execution, it is one of the finest works of the master. Two feet ten inches high, three feet nine inches wide.—2. Stragglers plundering a Farm. Most powerfully impressive by its dramatic truth! The desperation of the farmer, who would attack the soldiers with a pitchfork, but is held back by his wife and child; the insolence of the soldiers, one of whom cocks his musket, and another fires at some pigeons, form a striking contrast with two monks, who, enjoying themselves in eating and drinking, endeavour to make peace. Likewise very carefully executed. One foot eight and a-half inches high, one foot eight inches wide.—3. A Girl in white silk, and otherwise elegantly dressed, listens with pleasure to a richly-dressed young man, playing on the lute. An old man, behind a pillar, is watching them. In such pictures, which he rarely painted, Steen is very nearly equal to Metzu in clearness, force, and delicacy, but in general excels him in dramatic interest. One foot three inches high, one foot wide."

The Louvre possesses only one, but it is of a superior quality, although Mr. Smith, and the surveyors of the museum, who, in 1816, valued it at £32, do not consider it a good specimen of the painter's talent. This picture is worth £1,200. It represents a "Village Banquet."

The Belvidere Gallery, at Vienna, contains two, a "Village Wedding," and a "Dutch Family," a capital picture, dated 1663. The figures are one-third the size of life.

At the Pinacothek, at Munich, there are also two, "Some Boors quarrelling;" and "A Doctor feeling the pulse of a Sick Woman."

The Royal Gallery at Dresden contains only one, which represents a "Woman feeding her little Child."

The Royal Museum at Amsterdam is rich in this master's productions; it contains as many as eight. "The Portrait of the artist;" "Villagers returning from a Fête;" "A Scourer;" "The Baker;" "A Quack;" "St. Nicholas' Day, an excellent picture, with a very lively composition;" "The Backgammon Party;" and a "Country Wedding."

At the Hague are six pictures by Jan Steen, "The Family of the Painter;" "Representation of Human Life;" "A Doctor feeling the pulse of a Young Girl;" "A Dentist;" "A Poultry-yard;" and lastly, "A Doctor going to pay a visit to a Sick Person."

The Hermitage, St. Petersburg, "The Sick Girl and the Doctor."

In the Royal Museum of Berlin is found, "A Familiar Scene."

The Frankfort Museum includes "The Interior of a Room;" and a "Doctor dressing a Man's Wounds."

In the Florence Gallery, "Peasants seated at Table in an Arbour;" and "The Young Violinist;" are the only examples of Jan Steen.

In the museums of the departments of France, there are some beautiful works of this master.

At Montpellier are the "Repose of the Traveller;" and "A Familiar Scene." They both bear the signature of the master, and were bequeathed by M. Valdeau to the museum of this town.

At Nantes, there is a single picture of Steen's, called "Topers seated at Table."

Rouen possesses a gem, known as "The Loves of Jan Steen."

In the private collections of noblemen and gentlemen are to be found the most beautiful productions of our lively artist.

At M. Delesserts, in Paris, "The Interior of a Kitchen," and "St. Nicholas' Day."

It was not till lately that Jan Steen's pictures became known in the public sales of France, where their number has never been considerable.

At the Gagnat sale, in 1768, "A Dutch Interior" sold for £18.

At the Duc de Choiseul's sale, 1772, "A Sick Old Man,"



of which we here give an engraving, fetched £32 10s. "The Interior of an Alehouse," which heads this biography, realized £699 10s.

At the Prince of Conti's sale, 1777, "A Topsy Woman," who is being carried away in a wheelbarrow, while a little boy squirts water at her with a syringe, produced £64.

At the sale of Randon de Boisset, 1777, "The Skittle Players" went for £64.—"The Lesson on the Harpsichord" for £1,200 6s.

At the Calonne sale, 1788, "The Villagers' Dance" fetched

At the Van Leyden sale, 1804, "La Fiancée Précoce" went for £79.

At the Lampérière sale, 1817, "The Doctor and his Young Patient" reached £462, after a smart competition. This is a picture admirable for finish, firmness of touch, and brilliancy of colour. It contains three figures: the sick girl, her mother, and the doctor.

At the Rouge sale, 1818, "The Village Wedding" sold for £72; "La Danse de l'Œuf" for £120; "The Lesson on the Harpsichord" for £231 10s.



THE AGED INVALID.

£84 10s. This picture came from M. de Montriblou's collection.

At the Duc de Praslin's sale, 1793, "The Lesson on the Harpsichord," from Randon de Boisset's collection, produced £52.

At the Robit sale, 1801, "The Dancing Dog," which we here give (p. 168), was purchased for £112. This picture came from the rich collection of M. Nogaret.

At the Lanjeac sale, 1802, "The Skittle Players," from the cabinet of Randon de Boisset, was knocked down for £116, and "The Betrothal," for £70.

At the Lampérière sale, 1823, "A Familiar Scene" was purchased for £60; and "The Comic Concert" for £19.

At M. Erard's sale, 1832, "The Village Wedding" brought £196; "The Pleasures of the Kermess" £75.

At the sale of the Duc de Berri, 1837, "The Marriage of Cana" sold for £540. This picture has been added to Van Leyden's celebrated collection; it was the delight of the dowager, to whom it was brought every day, as a powerful specific against ennui, thoughts of sorrow, and of her approaching end!



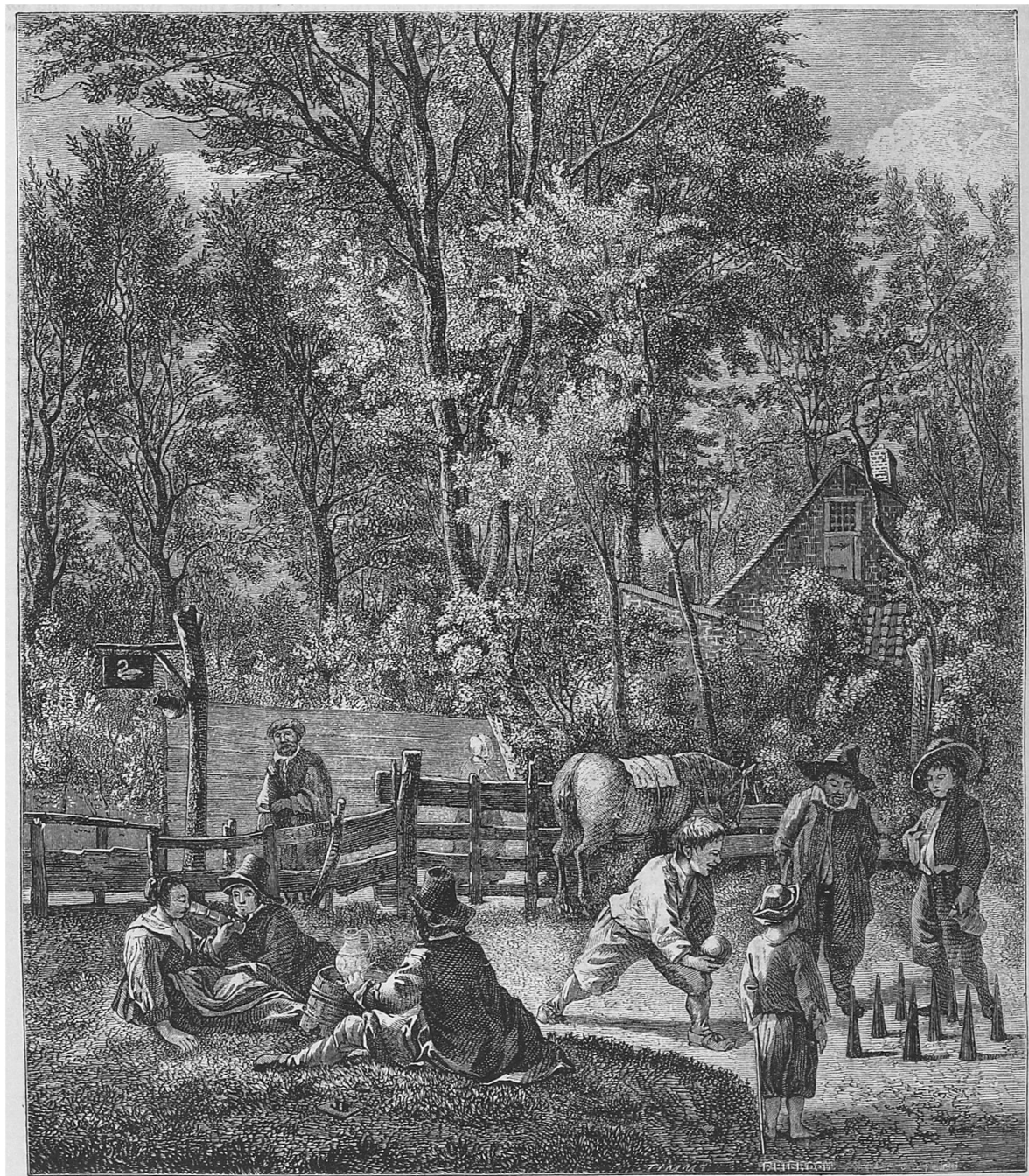
At the Heris' sale, 1841, the picture called "Indisposition" went for £224; and "The Wedding" for £112.

At the sale of the Count Perreux, 1841, "The Servant Girl dressed in a red Boddice" fetched £398.

At Paul Perrier's sale, in 1843, "The Marriage of Cana," from the collection of Duc de Berri, was purchased for £660.

£482 10s. The painting in this last picture seems to bid defiance to Terburg, Gerard Douw, or Metzu, on account of its elaborate finish and the beauty of the touch.

The drawings of Jan Steen are, like his paintings, full of animation and wit. We have seen a charming one, containing thirteen figures, amongst which is that of a little boy, who is beating a drum before the door of a house.



THE SKITTLE PLAYERS.

At the Vasserot sale, in 1845, the well-known picture "Resistance," and its companion, "The lost Bird," sold together for £90.

At the Meffre sale, in 1845, the "Fête des Seigneurs," sold for £268.

At Cardinal Fesch's sale, at Rome, in 1845, "The jovial Repast" went for £328, and "The after-dinner Nap" for

Jan Steen signed most of his pictures thus :

*Steen.* *Steen*  
1672